

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 133
By Kilby

A RESOLUTION to welcome Howard Henry Baker, Jr. back to the United States of America and to Tennessee following his honorable and illustrious tenure as the United States Ambassador to Japan.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly and the citizens of Tennessee are intensely proud of this State's sons and daughters who have made their mark in public service in this State and who have gone on to make great contributions in both the national and the international arenas; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that we should pause to specially recognize those estimable public servants who have dedicated themselves to improving the quality of life for their fellow citizens and who have committed their energy and intellectual resources in the cause of international relations; and

WHEREAS, Howard Henry Baker, Jr., former United States Senator, White House Chief of Staff and Ambassador to Japan, is one such estimable person who evinces the greatest integrity and probity in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, Howard Henry Baker, Jr. was born November 15, 1925 in Huntsville, Tennessee to the late Howard Henry Baker, Sr. and Dora Ladd Baker; his mother died when Howard Baker, Jr. was eight years old, and his maternal grandmother, Lillie Ladd Mauser, helped raise Howard and his younger sister; and

WHEREAS, when Howard Baker, Jr. was eleven years old, his father married Irene Bailey; Howard, Jr. attended primary and secondary schools in Huntsville until 1941 when he enrolled in McCallie School in Chattanooga, from which he graduated in 1943; and

WHEREAS, immediately upon graduation Howard Baker, Jr. enlisted in the United States Navy; he studied electrical engineering at the University of the South in Sewanee,

Tennessee and at Tulane University as a candidate for the Navy's V-12 officer training program; and

WHEREAS, Howard Baker, Jr. assumed naval duties during the summer and semester breaks, and following his naval career he earned a law degree from the University of Tennessee Law School at Knoxville. During his senior year he served as student body president; and

WHEREAS, following his graduation from law school, Howard Baker, Jr. joined the law firm in Huntsville which had been started by his grandfather; while practicing law in Huntsville, he involved himself in the life of the community where family roots were already deep; and

WHEREAS, Howard Baker, Jr. was an active member of his church as well as in many civic organizations; he participated in several hobbies, most notably, amateur photography, in which he became quite adept and which he pursues to this day; and

WHEREAS, throughout his career, Howard Baker, Jr. has authored publications of his writings and photography, including "No Margin for Error" in 1980; "Howard Baker's Washington" in 1982; "Big South Fork Country" in 1993; and "Scott's Gulf" in 2000; and

WHEREAS, in 1950, Howard Baker, Jr. served as campaign manager for his father's successful bid for the United States House of Representatives, representing Tennessee's Second District; during his father's first term, he met and began dating Joy Dirksen, daughter of U.S. Senator Everett McKinley Dirksen of Illinois; and

WHEREAS, the couple married in December, 1951 and made their home in Huntsville where Howard, Jr. continued to practice law; son Darek was born in 1953 and daughter Cynthia was born in 1956; and

WHEREAS, although Howard Baker, Jr. gave no evidence of political ambition in his youth, he decided to run for the United States Senate in 1964 in a special election to fill the vacancy created by the death of Senator Estes Kefauver; he narrowly lost to Democrat Ross Bass, but two years later he ran again, winning fifty-six percent of the popular vote and becoming Tennessee's first popularly elected Republican Senator; and

WHEREAS, during his first term, Howard Baker, Jr. passed legislation permitting federal revenue sharing with the states, helped draft the Clean Air Act and was instrumental in securing Tennessee as the site for the world's first nuclear breeder reactor power plant; during that first term he was twice narrowly defeated for the position of Senate Minority Leader; and

WHEREAS, Senator Baker was re-elected in 1972 and much of the first half of his second term was dominated by the Watergate Hearings in which he participated as a member of the Senate Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities; though a staunch friend of and advisor to President Richard Nixon, he conducted himself in an objective and non-partisan manner, pursuing the question of what the President knew and when he knew it; and

WHEREAS, Senator Baker gave the keynote address at the 1976 Republican convention and was considered by nominee Gerald Ford as a running-mate; he was elected Senate Minority Leader in 1977 and helped revise the Clean Air Act and supported the Panama Canal Treaties; and

WHEREAS, Howard Baker, Jr. won a third Senate term in 1978 and entered the presidential race in 1980; in March of that year he withdrew from the race and placed his support behind Ronald Reagan; and

WHEREAS, the Republican party gained control of the U.S. Senate in 1980, and Senator Baker became Senate Majority Leader, a post that he held until the end of his third term, when he elected not to run again; though a loyal Republican and a moderate throughout his years in the Senate, he never hesitated to vote independent of party influence on those occasions he deemed appropriate; and

WHEREAS, Howard Baker, Jr. returned to his private law practice until 1987, when he accepted President Reagan's call to become White House Chief of Staff, serving in that role until July, 1988; he considered another run for the presidency in 1988, but decided against it; and

WHEREAS, Howard Baker, Jr. spent the next 13 years practicing in a number of Tennessee law firms, including Vinson and Elkins; Baker, Worthington, Crossley, Stansberry, and Wolf; and Baker, Donelson, Bearman and Caldwell; in 1993, his first wife, Joy, died of cancer. On December 7, 1996 he married U.S. Senator Nancy Kassebaum of Kansas; and

WHEREAS, in March of 2001, President George W. Bush asked Howard Baker, Jr. to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Japan; in May his nomination was approved by the Senate and he was sworn in as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Japan; and

WHEREAS, as Ambassador, Howard Baker, Jr. strenuously promoted good trade relations, cultural and educational exchange between the two nations, and communicated administration positions on various important foreign policy issues, including the war on terror, the Iraqi war, human trafficking and concern about the policies of the regime in North Korea; and

WHEREAS, Howard Baker, Jr. retired as Ambassador to Japan in February 2005 and returned home, where he will have more time to be involved with the Howard H. Baker, Jr. Center for Public Policy at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville; the University of Tennessee Board of Trustees has voted to honor him with the campus's first honorary degree, and he will receive the Doctor of Humane Letters at the May 7 commencement, for which he is the commencement speaker; and

WHEREAS, Howard Baker, Jr.'s remarkable success as a public servant, whether in elective or appointive office, is directly attributable to his reliance on the time-honored values of hard work and common sense and his uncommon ability to work well with people from all walks of life; his consideration, civility and open manner are particularly refreshing in an era in which the political arena has grown more brusque and confrontational; and

WHEREAS, Howard Baker, Jr. is an extremely giving person who often reaches out with compassion to people whom life has treated unkindly, and epitomizes the ideal of the consummate professional, dedicated public servant and reliable friend and neighbor; and

WHEREAS, Howard Baker, Jr. is wholly committed to the noble precepts of public service that have earned Tennessee recognition as the "Volunteer State," and he should be specially recognized; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby commend Howard Henry Baker, Jr. for his honorable and astute service to the good people of Tennessee and this nation as a United States Senator, White House Chief of Staff, and Ambassador to Japan.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that on behalf of the Tennessee General Assembly and the people of Tennessee, we express our heartfelt welcome home to Ambassador Baker and

Senator Nancy Kassebaum Baker, and offer them our best wishes for much happiness and every success and satisfaction in all their future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.